

HOUSE BONDING BILL: HF629

CITY OF BLOOMING PRAIRIE CONTAMINATION REMEDIATION IMPROVEMENTS

Original Project Scope:

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is planning a full reconstruction of TH 218 within the municipal limits of Blooming Prairie. This project was originally initiated by MnDOT, with needed partnership of Blooming Prairie. The improvement of TH 218 is a necessary one as the highway has deteriorated beyond maintenance and serves as a major connector between Austin and Owatonna, with Blooming Prairie positioned in the middle. Along with the necessary surface improvements, MnDOT is looking to the City of Blooming Prairie to upgrade our municipally owned subsurface utilities within the corridor.

Contaminants:

During the preliminary design phase, MnDOT commissioned a Phase II Environmental Investigation Report (1,800 pages of findings and rising), which entails collecting physical data suggested to be present in the Phase I Report. Because this is a Trunk Highway through municipal limits, it was expected that some petroleum contamination would be found and dealt with as part of the project, and petro funds would be applied for to off-set those additional costs. However, once the Phase II investigation was initiated, high concentrations of Chlorinated Volatile Organic Compounds (CVOC's) were found in the soil and ground water within the corridor. Since this discovery, the City of Blooming Prairie has engaged in discussions with the MPCA and EPA to better understand this contamination, what it means, and if there is any financial relief available for the required remediation. Unfortunately, no such program or financial relief through these regulatory agencies exists.

Contamination Management:

In working within the guidelines of the MPCA and with the substantial data that has been collected on this contamination plume as a result of the Phase II efforts, the City of Blooming Prairie is expected to take on a major role in the contamination management and remediation within the corridor. As a result of the CVOC's known to be present, the City is expected to be responsible for the excavation and disposal costs of approximately 20,500 cubic yards of contaminated soils and replace these soils with 20,500 cubic yards of clean, imported granular embankments. The City is mandated to dewater, treat and discharge all groundwater encountered during the utility installation process as the contaminated groundwater plume covers the entire City Utility corridor. Additionally, the City of Blooming Prairie will be forced to utilize more expensive pipe materials and gaskets that are more resistant to CVOC's than traditional materials, as well as implement management practices to aid in reducing the migration of the existing contaminants, such as water stops and trench wraps.

Project Financials and Relief Request:

The City of Blooming Prairie, a town of less than 2,000 residents, is being asked to participate financially in the TH 218 improvements in the estimated amount of \$3,909,000. This cost is simply too large for the City of Blooming Prairie to absorb, and at no fault of their own. This contamination was caused by industries within the corridor that are not associated with the City, and the City of Blooming Prairie does not have the regulatory authority to control this public health threat. The City of Blooming Prairie currently has bonding leverage in the amount of \$3,600,000 with no relief until 2030 and beyond. Like many small municipalities, the City has their own infrastructure deficiencies that need to be addressed and cannot afford to carry this financial burden. The City of Blooming Prairie respectfully requests funding relief in the amount of \$3,909,000 to address this public health threat in conjunction with the proposed MnDOT TH 218 Improvements Project.

Project Timeline:

- 2018: MnDOT Initiates Project Scoping
- 2020: MnDOT Initiates Preliminary Design (Phase II Environmental Investigation Report begins)
- 2022: MnDOT Initiates Detailed Design
- 2023: MnDOT Requests Municipal Consent
- 2023 – Present: Blooming Prairie Seeks Funding Relief
- 2024: MnDOT Halts Project Construction until 2026/ 2027 Dependent on Funding Relief for City of Blooming Prairie.

On behalf of the City of Blooming Prairie, thank you for your consideration of this important project to address the public health threat and replace vital infrastructure within the TH 218 corridor.